

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5458

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BOMBAY IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 5894

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: TENSIONS REMAIN HIGH IN OLD DELHI

REF: NEW DELHI 5821

1. TENSIONS IN MUSLIM AREAS OF OLD DELHI REMAIN AT A HIGH LEVEL. THE SAMACHAR CHIEF TOLD US THAT A NUMBER OF POLGRIMS FROM PAKISTAN TO ATTEND REMEMBRANCE CEREMONIES FOR MUSLIM SAINT, NIZZAMUDIN, ARE AMONG THE SEVERAL HUNDRED ARRESTED IN THE LAST FEW DAYS. THE INFLUENTIAL IMAM OF THE MAMA MASJID, THE LARGEST MOSQUE IN DELHI, IS RUMORED TO HAVE APPEALED TO MUSLIMS TO RESIST STERILIZATION. AROUND THE CLOCK CURFEWS IN AT LEAST FOUR AREAS OF THE OLD CITY WERE LIFTED FOR ONE HOUR THIS MORNING TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO SHOP. SOME OF OUR CONTACTS ARE PREDICTING TROUBLE IF THE WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING AT MAMA MASJID IS PERMITTED TO TAKE PLACE TOMORROW.

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2. THE GOI HOME MINISTRY DID NOT MENTION FAMILY PLANNING

OR STERILIZATION (WHICH INCREASINGLY SEEMS TO BE THE KEY ISSUE) IN AN APRIL 21 NEWS RELEASE ON THE APRIL 19 INCIDENT ON ASAFA ALI ROAD. THE RELEASE CARRIED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF MOST DELHI PAPERS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: IN THE COURSE OF A DRIVE FOR THE REMOVAL OF ENCROACHMENTS AND DEMOLITION OF UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURES IN SEVERAL PARTS OF DELHI, THE DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TOOK UP DEMOLITION OPERATIONS NEAR TURKMAN GATE ON APRIL 14. THOSE AFFECTED BY SUCH OPERATIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OFFERED ALTERNATIVE SITES WITH SOME BASIC AMENITIES. THIS WAS DONE IN THIS CASE ALSO AND ABOUT 200 FAMILIES WERE SHIFETED TO NEW LOCALITIES.

"FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS THE DRIVE PROGRESSED WITHOUT ANY INCIDENT. HOWEVER, ON APRIL 19, ABOUT 10-30 A.M., 500 PERSONS, INCLUDING ABOUT 80 WOMEN, GATHERED NEAR TURKMAN GATE AND PROTESTED AGAINST THE DEMOLITION OPERATIONS. SOME LEADERS IN THE CROWD MADE INCITING SPEECHES. THE OFFICERS ON THE SPOT SUCCEEDED IN PACIFYING THE CROWD FOR SOME TIME BY EXPLAINING THE CORRECT POSITION REGARDING THESE OPERATIONS.

" AROUND 1-00 P.M., AFTER PRAYERS AT THE FAZLE ILAHI MOSQUE NEAR THE TURKMAN GATE AREA, THE CROWDS SWELLED TO AROUND 3,000 AND STARTED INDULGING IN SEVERE BRICKBATTING. GROUPS OF ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENTS MOVED IN THE SHOPPING AREA OF ASAFA ALI ROAD ALSO AND INDULGED IN VIOLENCE AND VANDALISM. AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO SET FIRE TO A BUILDING ADJOINING THE TURKMAN GATE POLICE POST. THE POLICE POST WAS ALSO SURROUNDED BY THE MISCREANTS. ON RECEIVING THESE REPORTS SENIOR OFFICERS, INCLUDING THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AND THE DIG, RUSHED TO THE SCENE. WHEN PERSUASION AND REPEATED WARNINGS FAILED TO DISPERSE THE CROWD THE POLICE HAD TO RESORT TO CANE CHARGE AND TEAR GAS. THESE ALSO PROVED INEFFECTIVE AND THE MOB VIOLENCE INCREASED. THE HEAVY BRICKBATTING BY THE CROWD FROM ROOFTOPS INJURED 30 OFFICIALS, INCLUDING ONE SP AND THREE MAGISTRATES. A SUB-INSPECTOR AND TWO OTHER POLICE OFFICIALS WERE STABBED. THE POLICE WAS THEREAFTER LEFT WITH NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE EXCEPT TO OPEN FIRE IN ORDER TO PREVENT SERIOUS HARM TO LIFE

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AND PROPERTY.

"AS A RESULT OF FIRING THREE PERSONS DIED ON THE SPOT AND TWO MORE SUCCUMBED LATER TO THEIR INJURIES IN HOSPITAL. ANOTHER 12 PERSONS, INCLUDING TWO HAVING GUN SHOT WOUNDS, WERE HOSPITALISED FOR TREATMENT.

" THE SITUATION IS NOW UNDER CONTROL. AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE CURFEW HAS BEEN IMPOSED IN THE AREA OF MAJA MASJID, AND PARTS OF KAMALA MARKET AND HAUZ KAZI. WITH THE

RELAXATION FOR AN HOUR BETWEEN 11-00 A.M. AND 12-00 NOON

THE CURFEW WILL BE IN FORCE TILL APRIL 23." UNQUOTE.

SAXBE

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